

LOCAL & STATE
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Miami Herald

H1

POLITICS

Florida Democrats’ chief out after impropriety allegations

BY PATRICIA MAZZEI
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Stephen Bittel’s rocky tenure as Florida Democratic Party chairman ended in disgrace Friday after he said he would resign following accusations from women that he leered at them, made suggestive comments and

created an unprofessional work environment. “When my personal situation becomes distracting to our core mission of electing Democrats and making Florida better, it is time for me to step aside,” Bittel said in a statement. “I am proud of what we have built as a Party and the wins we have had for Florida families, but I apologize

for all who have felt uncomfortable during my tenure at the Democratic Party.” Bittel will formally resign next week. Party leaders will elect his successor Dec. 9 in Orlando. Elected in January after a contentious internal campaign, Bittel lasted less than a year on the job. His departure marks the latest case of sexual impropriety shak-

ing the state Capitol. Bittel’s position became untenable after all four major Democratic candidates for Florida governor urged his ouster following a Politico Florida report late Thursday in which six women anonymously complained about

SEE RESIGNATION, 12A



AMERICAS

NEW RULES FOR TRAVEL TO CUBA

Trump administration’s new regulations for travel to Cuba include placing 83 Cuban hotels on a restricted list. 19A



TROPICAL LIFE

SOUL FOOD ON SOUTH BEACH

Beloved Jackson Soul Food restaurant has crossed the Venetian Causeway and makes its debut on Ocean Drive. 1C



LOCAL & STATE

FRANKEN CANCELS APPEARANCES

Sen. Al Franken canceled his Miami and Atlanta book fair appearances in the wake of a sexual harassment scandal. 3A

MIAMI

Wynwood’s next frontier?



A rendering shows the size and scale of a moderately priced apartment development proposed by Westdale Real Estate Development. The project would replace an existing city block of residences and shops just north of 29th Street.

Development plans for artsy neighborhood’s Little San Juan raise hopes of renewal and fears of gentrification

BY ANDRES VIGLUCCI
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Even as Wynwood’s old warehouse district famously went through a frenzied, hip rejuvenation over the past several years, the hardscrabble working-class residential slice of the neighborhood to the north went virtually unnoticed and untouched. Now that may be about to

change. A Texas developer has quietly bought up an entire block of homes, small apartment houses and shops in the lesser-known half of Wynwood that lies north of 29th Street, with plans to raze everything on it. In its place, the company plans to build some 200 new dwellings and fresh commercial spaces. It would be the first new development in decades in the deteriorated neighborhood, historically nicknamed Little San Juan

because of its one-time majority Puerto Rican population. But though many have welcomed Westdale Real Estate Investment Management’s plan as a harbinger of long-overdue revitalization, to others it’s the first incursion of unwanted gentrification into the neighborhood. And that, they worry, will bring rising rents and the displacement of dozens of poor residents. Westdale’s proposal comes amid a housing crunch that has

turned Miami into one of the country’s most unaffordable cities for renters. Gentrification has become a much-debated topic as redevelopment reaches into low-income neighborhoods like Little Haiti and East Little Havana. Those areas are among the city’s last remaining residential enclaves that are both affordable and centrally located. But the dilemma in Wyn-

SEE GENTRIFICATION, 2A

FRATERNITIES

Pledges’ deaths spark crackdown on Greek life

BY ALEX HARRIS
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The days of “wink and nod” responses to bad behavior in Greek Life — the college system of social fraternities and sororities — are over. Universities are getting more aggressive as the list of Greek-related deaths grows. This year alone, four young men pledging fraternities at universities around the country died after parties or initiation events.



JOSEPH REEDY AP

The Pi Kappa Phi fraternity house where a 20-year-old pledge died is seen near Florida State University in Tallahassee.

At all four schools — including Florida State University — campus presidents suspended Greek life. Matthew Ellis, a pledge to Texas State University’s Phi Kappa Psi chapter, was found dead Monday. He was 20. Andrew Coffey, a 20-year-old pledge to FSU’s Pi Kappa Phi fraternity, was found dead on Nov. 3. He went to Pompano Beach High School. Maxwell Gruver, 18, died during a hazing ritual for Louisiana

State University’s Phi Delta Theta fraternity on Sept. 14. His blood alcohol content was .496 percent. Timothy Piazza, 19, died Feb. 4 while pledging Beta Theta Pi’s Penn State chapter. Investigators found he had at least 18 drinks in less than two hours. Alongside the death toll is a string of bad — and occasionally illegal — behaviors, including accusations of cocaine traffick-

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8C
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Television

3-13A
2C, 9C
7C

